

GREATER LAS VEGAS ORCHID SOCIETY

THE ORCHID COLUMN

CAROL SIEGEL, EDITOR



SUNDAY, JULY 12, 2015
1PM LIVE PIANO MUSIC
2 PM MEETING
RAINBOW LIBRARY
3150 Buffalo at Cheyenne

SPECIAL EVENTS

July 12, 2015 Peter Lin "Cattleya Species and How to Grow Them"
August 2, 2015 Mark Romansky "Orchids in the Home"
Sept 13, 2015 Alan Koch "Orchid Biology"
October 4, 2015 Diana Smith "Pests"
November 1, 2015 Cathy Loftfield "Orchids Around the World"
Dec 6, 2015 Holiday Party
January 10, 2016 Mary Gerritsen "The Orchids of Borneo"
Feb 2, 2016 Fred Clarke "Catasetum"
March 6, 2016 Guillermo Salazar "African Orchids"
April 3, 2016 Greenhouse Tour
Native Orchid Walk
May 1, 2016 Art Chadwick "Large-Flowered Cattleyas"
June 5 Ron Parsons "Orchids of Indonesia"
Nov 6, 2015 Steve Frowine "Growing Under Lights and In the Window"

JULY 12 THE SPEAKER: PETER LIN
CATTELEYA SPECIES AND HOW TO GROW THEM

Please note that our meeting is the second Sunday in July, NOT the first one, because of the July 4th holiday. Peter Lin will be presenting his newest talk: Cattleya Species and Their Culture. In his words, "Cattleyas have been grown for many years and there are now thousands of hybrids. Before hybrids, species were first grown. Learn about the many different species and some of their culture requirements. This fast -paced PowerPoint presentation will discuss most of the Cattleya species. Peter will also discuss some of the challenges in repotting these orchids. Peter started growing orchids over 30 years ago, but then stopped. It wasn't until about 12 years ago that the orchid "bug" came back, and he is now heavily involved once again. He is an accredited judge with the American Orchid Society and a hybridizer of mini-catts. He enjoys meeting with other orchid enthusiasts, and can often be found at various orchid shows and societies around the country. He also has hundreds of photos of his orchids that he maintains on Flickr. You can view them by typing this address into the internet: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/minicatt/collections/> Due to limited growing space, Peter likes to specialize in miniature orchids, both species and hybrids, and has received numerous AOS awards. His other interests in orchids include Dendrobiums, Angraecoids, and Neofinetias. He will bring orchids to sell. His website is www.diamondorchids.com."



POTLUCK IN JULY

On July 12, we will be having our potluck at our meeting in the library. Everyone who is able to will bring a dish with serving spoons for 10-12 people. We have limited space for reheating so food that is ready to go is always a good idea- salads and desserts are usually best- things like chicken salad, tuna salad with rolls or bread, vegetable salads, rice or pasta salads, egg salad, Chinese salad, fruit salad, layered salads, rice, sliced meats, sandwiches, bagels, cream cheese, lox- like that. You can, of course, bring anything you want! We will make it work. Cathy Loftfield will be bringing the paper goods, and Jeannie Salles has kindly volunteered to bring the drinks. If you can't bring something for whatever reason, come anyway. We want you.

In August (August 2nd), we will be having our annual pizza party and chocolate bar. The club will be providing Pizza Hut pizza, and each of us will bring something chocolate, anything chocolate, everything chocolate. It is a decadent good time. New member Susan Hochman has graciously agreed to bring drinks, and Jean Hill has graciously offered to bring paper goods.

FABULOUS GOOD TIME AT OUR JUNE MEETING



The room was absolutely packed as a record crowd came out to hear Jason Fischer regale us with tales of the shows and orchids of Japan and New Zealand. We loved his plants, and we loved him. Don't forget to check out the wonderful videos on his website, Orchids Limited, www.orchidweb.com. We thank the kind people who brought food for us, Chrisitina de la Cruz, Jean Hill, Ole Borresen, Carol Siegel, Don Gault, Doris Fairchild, Ana Y., and Joe Raba. It was just perfect!

We had five new members join. We welcomed Steve Hochman's charming daughter Susan, who did a great job at the welcome desk. Happy to have Stella Charvet back and to welcome Rainey Schneider, Randa Stice and Debra Walker as members. We also had a dozen guests visit us and enliven our room including Joyce Fong, Marcia Newyear, Rachel Pico, Connie Jones, Jeanne Harris, Pouné Bahrampous, Irma McCon, Margie Carlson, Judi Steffes, Lynn Yamas, and Franco Cannizzano.

REALLY! We thank Cathy Loftfield for her hard work advertising the club. It really is paying off.

We hope you had fun at our meeting and will come back and join us. It is \$30 for a single member and \$45 for a couple residing at the same address. Starting in July, as a special offer, for \$45 for a single and \$65 for a couple, a new member will be paid up for the rest of 2015 and ALSO all of 2016.

We thank Ole and Tony and Joel for all the help with the gathering and sale of hotel plants. We made \$100 at the meeting and could not do it without their hard work.

Many thanks to Ole who hosted members at his home who wanted to buy blooming phals and oncidium from the hotels. He donated \$130 to the club from the weekend event. We are most grateful for this act of friendship.

Good luck to Liz Waters in Oregon. Congratulations to Diana Smith on her retirement. We love you both. Congratulations to Leslie Doyle on the article about her in Desert Companion. Way to go...

The adventures of Cathy and Jeannie
By Cathy Loftfield

We embarked on our journey to Orchid Digest Speakers' Day on June 13th and due to heavy traffic we missed the first speaker, Steve Beckendorf, "Searching for Orchids in Southeastern Peru". I was told that it was a superb presentation. We arrived for the next speaker Peter Lin, who presented "Trending Phalaenopsis - Novelty Hybridizing. (This is not the same Peter Lin who speaks at GLVOS). Peter Lin owns Big Leaf Orchids in Southlake, Texas. His specialty is phalaenopsis orchids because of their long lasting flowers, as well as the diverse selection of flower sizes, colors, and patterns. Peter Lin was both speaker and vendor. So needless to say, we not only fell in love with these lovely orchids, we had to purchase several of them. His website is bigleaforchids.com

His talk was most informative regarding hybridizing with the following species: *P. violacea*, *P. bellina*, *P. amboinensis*, *P. cornu-cervi* and several others. Two of the most famous species that are used extensively in novelty Phalaenopsis hybridization are *P. violacea*, native to Malaya and *P. bellina*, native to Borneo. *P. violacea* is from peninsular Malaysia and are more star-shaped with even pink/lavender coloration and produce more or less typical phalaenopsis leaves. *P. bellina* orchids are from Borneo and have round petals that are greenish to white with more purple on the bottom sepals. Both species have very nice sweet fragrance and long lasting flowers. They both bloom in late summer. These species and their hybrids are not difficult to grow, keep moist and do not allow water in the crown and keep at a temperature above 60F. Their offspring are fragrant, also. One of the advantages of the species and their hybrids is they do not need a lot of space to grow. These orchids are perfect for small spaces. To keep these orchids blooming, do not cut off the stems (spikes), as they will keep branching and flowering. See end of article for pictures.

The next speakers were Harold Koopowitz and Stephen Hampson. They presented "Madagascar: Leaping Lemurs and Orchids". This was a brilliant talk about their trip/tour of Madagascar along with other members of Orchid Digest. This trip was not for the faint of heart. Some of the roads they traveled needed more than four-wheel drive. The orchids that were in bloom and the sweet lemurs captured your heart. A wonderful guided tour of Madagascar because you felt like you were on the tour with them.

The last presentation was by Carol Woodin, "An Artist on the Trail". She explained her process of creating prints. She either goes to the site where the orchid dwells, or to a nursery, or to friends' homes/greenhouses, etc., where she draws each part of the orchid plant, then completes the print by putting all the parts together, so that the print is anatomically correct as it is found in nature. Her prints are beautiful. Carol Woodin is a noted international botanical artist.

Several notes about this year's Speakers' Day: First, the vendors were Sunset Valley Orchids, Cal Orchid, Andy's Orchids, and Big Leaf Orchids. Each vendor brought their best orchids. The shopping was great. Next, the wine, cheese, and buffet were outstanding this year.

The next morning Jeannie and I headed to the Los Angeles Arboretum. We planned to visit the Tropical Greenhouse where there are many orchids, Grace Kailman perennial garden, California native garden, Meyberg Waterfall and many more sites. However, as we came out of the Australian Discovery Area, we discovered a large exotic show and plant sale. Well needless to say, we devoted the rest of our allotted time to discovering and purchasing exotic plants. Another highlight at the show and plant sale was a room, where a judging of all types of plants was placed on long tables. The blue ribbon winner was a very large plant of Cattleya aka Laelia purpurata. There must have been 50 – 60blooms that were all perfect. What a delight to behold. See end of article for picture.

As our adventure was coming to an end, we drove to Hollywood and had a lovely lunch with my son Tony and his girlfriend, Lynn. It was go great to see Tony and Lynn even for just a little while. Then we were off and headed back to Las Vegas. We had a wonderful adventure.

The pictures noted below include the following:

Phalaenopsis bellina, Phalaenopsis violacea

Phalaenopsis bellina (specimen plant)

Phalaenopsis hybrid, Cattleya aka Laelia Purpurata

Phalaenopsis bellina

Phal bellina is native to Borneo. Flowers have round petals that are greenish white with more purple on the bottom sepals.

Very nice sweet fragrance and long lasting flowers. Blooms in late summer.



Phalaenopsis violaeca

Phal violaeca is native to Malaya. Plants from peninsular Malaysia are more star shaped with even pink/lavender coloration and produce more or less typical phalaenopsis leaves. Blooms in late summer and is fragrant.



Phalaenopsis bellina

This is a specimen plant of Phalaenopsis bellina from Borneo.

Do not cut the stems (spikes) as they will keep branching and flowering.



Phalaenopsis hybrid amboinensis x Germaine Vincent



Cattleya aka Laelia Purpurata



**If It Turns Brown and Falls Off, Is It Dead?
Ten Questions You Are Ashamed to Ask
By Carol Siegel**

The dirty little secret of orchid growing is that many of us love our orchids to death. Drugged by the irresistible beauty of these magnificent flowers, we keep buying orchids like a nervous tick before we really know how to care for them or what to buy. Many of us, especially new people, have so many questions about growing that we don't know where to start and are embarrassed to seem so totally clueless. Join the club (oh... you already have...) Here are some of the questions you might have wanted to ask but just couldn't.

1.If it turns brown and falls off, is it dead?

Not necessarily. New growers often confuse the dying back of the flower spike with the death of the plant. Sturdy phalaenopsis flowers can last for months, but cattleya flower spikes usually last only one or two weeks. A coryanthes, bulbophyllum or stanhopea bloom may last a few glorious days- or even less. A vanilla flower will open in the morning and be gone by noon. After that, the flower dies. Nothing you do makes them last

much longer than they are genetically programmed to last. It is not your fault. The plant, however, is not dead and will re-bloom.

Sometimes, lower leaves will turn yellow and fall off. This is nature's way of reclaiming chlorophyll before getting rid of an old leaf. Healthy plants sometimes lose leaves. Worry if your newest leaves turn yellow and look bad. If a lot of leaves fall off, inspect your plant closely for scale, mealy bug or mite infestation and treat. You may not be giving enough water to your plant, or it may be getting too much, less of a problem in the desert we live in. Pull the plant out of the pot and see if the roots are mushy. Perhaps it is time to repot. Some plants look dead, like cycnoches or catasetum, but, after you withhold water all winter, they will start to grow again.

2. What is that brown thing sticking up out of the plant without any flowers? Should I cut it off?

Like most things in life, the correct answer is, "It depends..." You can always leave the brown thing- the stem of the flower spike or inflorescence- until it gets all crispy, and there is no doubt that it is dead. Cattleya flowers and sheaths can be removed after blooming.

Be careful about cutting off the spikes of paphiopedilum or phragmipedium since they may have more buds to flower. Phalaenopsis species spike should rarely be cut since they bloom year after year on a continually elongating spike. In addition, some orchids will bloom again off the same spike more than once.

Phalaenopsis will bloom again after the flowers die if you cut the flower stem half way back just above one of the nodes or little notches or rings on the flower spike. Quite often, it will branch out again in three or four months with a new spike. Most recommend to do this just once. The Butterfly Orchid, *Psychopsis (Oncidium) papilio* will thrust out one wiry inflorescence that will bloom every three to five weeks every year for many years. Don't cut it off. Make sure you read before you cut.

3. I bought an orchid at Trader Joe's and now it is kind of white and fuzzy. Is that okay?

White and fuzzy is definitely not a good thing for an orchid to be. You got an extra little gift with your plant, some scale insect like mealy bugs. Make sure you examine all new plants thoroughly under the light with a magnifying glass. Isolate your new orchids like a plague victim from a third-world country before putting it in with your other orchids. Many people spray all new plants routinely. I don't spray them, but I do repot all new plants as soon as possible since I feel the potting medium may have all sorts of undesirables hiding. Remove the mealy bugs or scale with a toothbrush dipped in alcohol or soap. I like to spray with alcohol mixed with a few tablespoons of horticultural oil. Spray if necessary with Neem oil, insecticidal soap, horticultural oil, or insecticide. Wear gloves and spray outside.

4. I have a water-softener in my house. Can I water my orchids with that water?

NO! That water has enough sodium in it to kill your orchids. You can put bags of potassium in the softener instead of sodium, and your orchid will be happy.

5. Can I use cold tap water to water my orchids?

Orchids like water that is not too cold. Tap water is not the greatest thing for your orchids. Las Vegas tap water passes through mountains of limestone and gypsum picking up lots of calcium carbonate and calcium sulfate which makes our water very alkaline. Orchids don't like all that calcium. If you must use tap water, at least flush out the plant thoroughly every now and then with bottled water—or even more tap water to remove the accumulated salts. Orchids will thrive with bottled or distilled water, reverse osmosis water, or de-ionized water. Dave Marvel of Marvel Water will install a de-ionized water unit for you or a reverse osmosis system. 702-806-8989.

6. I hate my orchid. It never blooms. Should I throw it out?

Oh, honey, we all feel like that sometimes. A trip to the garbage can may be answer for your hopeless cause, but consider some other things. A new orchid may have spent a lot of time in a dark box on a shipping dock or been half-frozen in a UPS truck before it got to you.

It may be horrified to have been moved from balmy Hawaii to our hot, dry desert. It may skip a season of blooming as it adjusts to this new situation. You may be expecting your orchid to bloom more often than is natural. Many orchids bloom just once a year, like daffodils, and you will be without flowers for 11 months or more a year.

Increasing light will often make an orchid bloom. Buy a light meter (www.charleysgreenhouse.com) and make sure your window, light cart, or greenhouse is getting enough light for your particular orchid. Moving the orchid to another location, adding a fluorescent light, or moving the orchid closer to the light source will often help.

Some plants, like phalaenopsis, cymbidium, and some paphiopedilum need to be chilled 10-20 degrees below yearly temperatures for three weeks in the fall in order to bloom. Buy a minimum-maximum thermometer, open the door or window a crack, or put your plant in an unheated part of the house. They will then bloom! (Remember you will get better. I have been growing for 15, and I have finally learned what to grow and how to grow it in my garage under lights. It takes time to grow orchids in the desert.)

7.How often do I have to change the soil in my clay pots?

Leave the soil to the houseplants, darlin'; your orchids don't like it! 80% of orchids in nature grow on trees with their roots in the air. Many of us like to mount our plants and let the roots hang free. You have to water a lot more often then, so, for our convenience we put them in pots. The orchids still like lots of air around the roots, so we put them in a mix that is more open than soil like bark or a bark mix, coconut chunks, sphagnum moss, or adiatomite mix. Most of us use plastic pots since plastic pots in the desert keep the plants wetter than clay pots do. However, Dan Mumau likes clay pots to leach out salts and then puts the clay pot inside a plastic pot to retain moisture. It is generally recommended to repot your plants every year or two. If you pull your plant out of the pot, which is not as scary as it sounds, and the mix looks mushy and compacted or the roots are mushy, it is time to repot. I like to repot everything new I get. But then, I like to vacuum every day, too. If you use Kiwi Bark, it is claimed that your mix takes several years to break down. We shall see. If you pot in sphagnum moss, you will have to repot every 6-9 months since it breaks down easily.

8.I love vandas, and I keep buying them, but they just don't bloom. They are so big that I can't fit them on the shelf in front of my window, and the roots are kind of shrivelly-looking. What should I do?

(Dennis Dean grows these gorgeous ones, and I figure I should be able to, too!

Dearie, my sister wears a size 6 shoe and a size ten dress, but they wouldn't fit me at all! That doesn't mean I can't look great, but you gotta be realistic. Give yourself and the vandas a break, and start buying something that fits your conditions. Dennis has a big, bright greenhouse he built himself (clever boy!) with a water wall, misting, and lots of space. For your shelf on the window, a collection of phalaenopsis species and hybrids would be just perfect. They are in bloom for months and months at a time, take up really little room, are very tolerant of the inexperienced grower and are cheap. Get yourself a whole lot of weird and interesting bulbophyllum or pleurothallids that take up no room and need little light. Grow paphiopedilum that are spectacular with long petals or big pouches. They don't need much room or light. Get it? Make it work for you.

9.I buy all my orchids at Home Depot for \$14.98. I notice that some of the speakers bring in much more expensive plants. Why would I ever pay more for an orchid?

My friend thinks Neiman Marcus should be called "Needless Mark-up". It is true that sometimes expensive plants are only for fools with less sense than money. However, some things make an orchid worth more. If your Home Depot orchid has all its flowers open, then you will probably have no flowers shortly after you get it home. It is worth less than one with only buds that will give you pleasure for months. If your plant has only a

few flowers or those flowers are very small or misshapen, then it is really worth less than a plant with lots of big, flat flowers. If your plant has been mis-handled by the delivery guys at the hardware store, then its roots may be mushy or too dry, and your plant may be very stressed, already a bad thing. Pull the plant up when no one is looking and see if it has good roots. If your plant has only one spike of flowers, it is worth less than one with many spikes.

Also, some orchids are more expensive because they are rare and not mass-produced like phalaenopsis. You may like the common orchids, but sooner or later, you will develop a taste for designer orchids, and they are more expensive. Sometimes an award—winning plant will cost more because it is so spectacular and hard-to-find. However, orchids are like wine. If you are happy with a less expensive orchid, then you are the lucky one!!

10.I waited and waited and then the bud fell off. What did I do wrong?

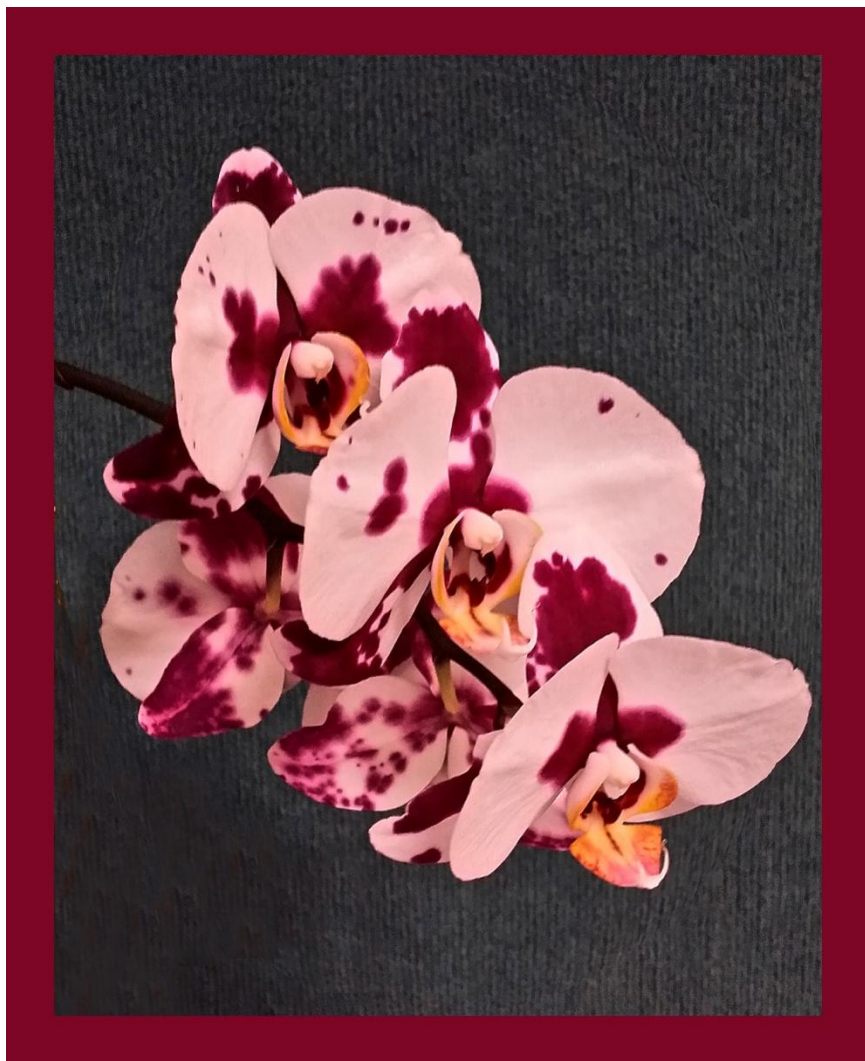
Dear Friend, the rumor is that orchids have sense of humor. They think this is just hilarious. Could it be that orchids have a mean streak? What can you do?

If this happens on a cattleya, try making a little opening at the tip of the sheath covering the buds next time. Sue Fordyce says this helps prevent condensation from rotting the bud. Try not to get the bud wet. With paphs, make sure you do not get water in the crotch of the leaves where the bud is forming. Wipe it dry with toilet paper or q-tip or blow the water out with a straw if it gets wet. Prevent plants from getting too dry between watering by paying particular attention to these plants. Water will be withdrawn from the buds in a very dry plants, and they will blast. Avoid wide swings in temperature when the plant is in bud. Sometimes, the change in temperature when you receive a new plant is enough, sadly to drop the bud. Be careful not to expose plants in bud to car, paint, chemical or natural gas fumes. The orchid naturally produces ethylene to collapse petals and buds after pollination, and you don't want to trigger this! Sometimes, it just happens. Try again. Remember that if the plant does not need to invest a lot of energy in blooming, it will grow bigger and stronger and bloom well next time.

You have questions. We have answers. Stop any of us at the meeting, and you will be surprised at how much we have to share. Of course, many of us disagree on the answers, but that is what makes it so much fun.

MORE BELOW....

**WINNER BEST ORCHID CLAUDIA DRAKE
HARLEQUIN ORCHID GROWN IN WATER**



**GORGEOUS PHOTOS BY OUR VERY OWN SWEETHEART
CATHY LOFTFIELD**

**WINNER BEST NEWBIE ORCHID CHRISTINA DE LA CRUZ
PRESENTING HER “TWINS” PAPHIOPEDILUM RED ILLUSION**



DON'T FORGET TO BRING YOUR BLOOMING BEAUTIES TO THE MEETING TO WIN A BLUE RIBBON. YOU CAN WIN A NEWBIE AWARD, A MOST INTERESTING STORY AWARD, A BEST ORCHID AWARD. THE SPEAKER PICKS THE WINNERS, AND WE NEVER KNOW WHAT THEY WILL CHOOSE! YOU CAN ENTER OUR OCTOBER DRAWING FOR A BLOOMING ORCHID BASKET IF YOU ARE A WINNER!

WINNER BEST STORY MYRA GLASSMAN DENDROBIUM
PHALAENOPSIS

